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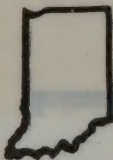
The Man and His Land

by

Clifford H. Richards



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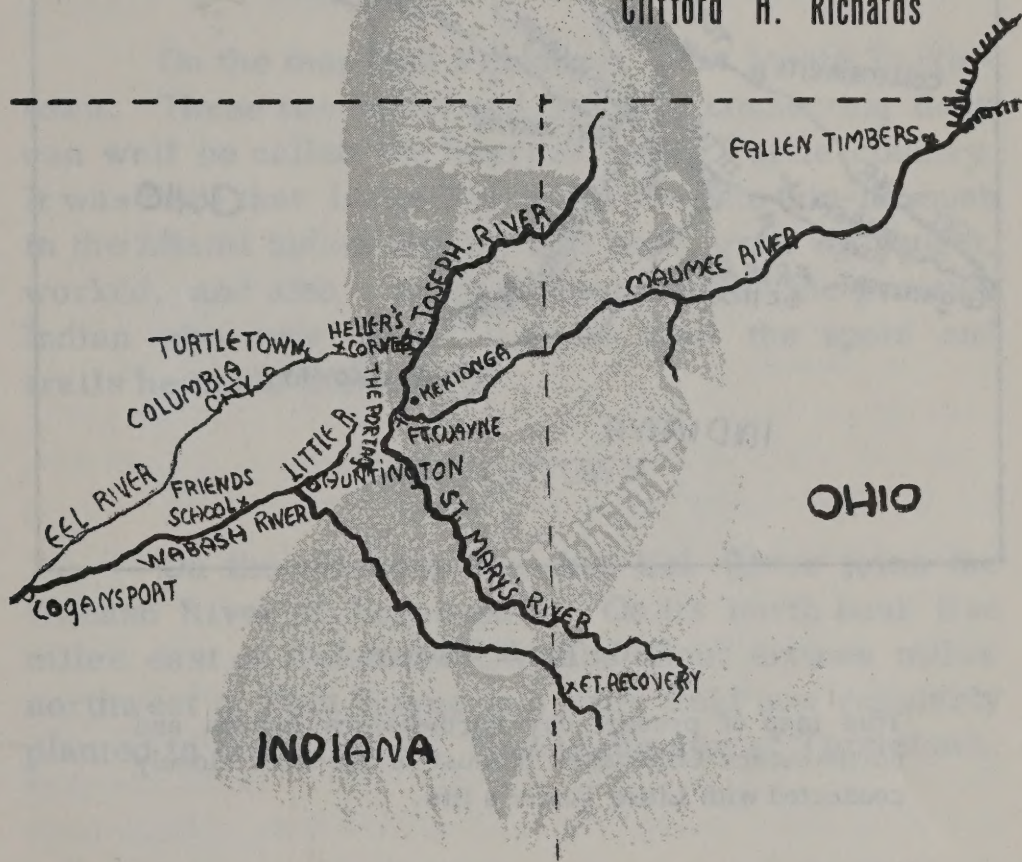
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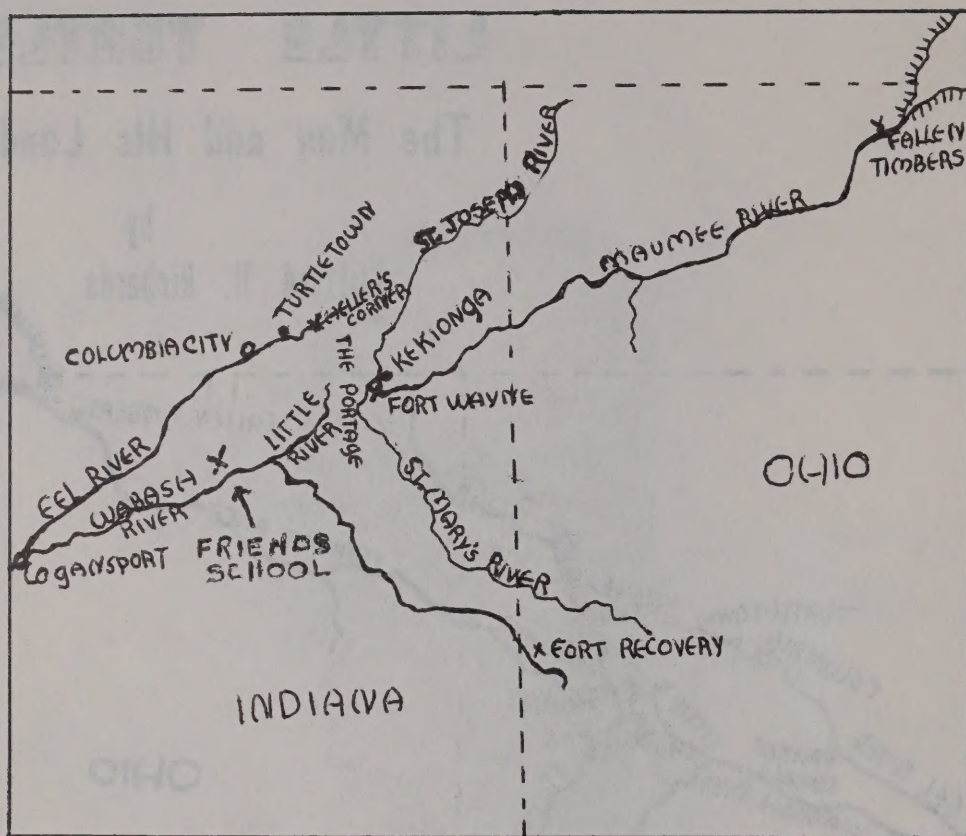
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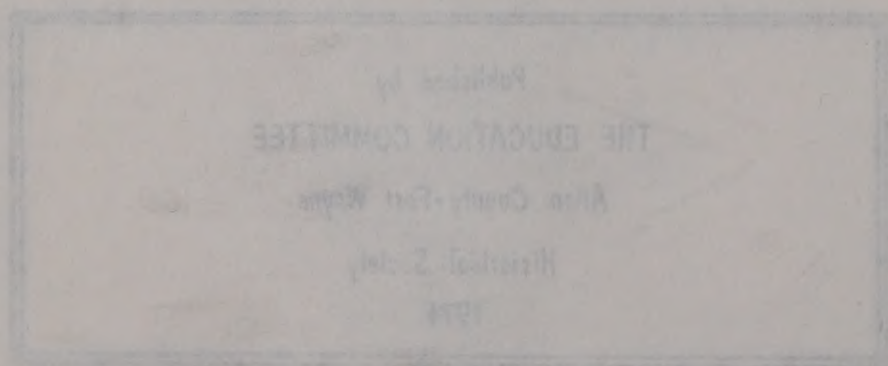


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Little Turtle Country

This map of present-day northeastern Indiana and northwestern Ohio takes in most of the sites closely connected with Little Turtle's life.



EXPLORING LITTLE TURTLE COUNTRY

On the map find Kekionga. Now locate Turtletown. These two spots and the trail connecting them can well be called the heart of Little Turtle country. It was here that Little Turtle (or Me-she-kin-no-quah in the Miami Indian tongue) was born, grew up, fought, worked, and died. In many ways he was the greatest Indian who ever lived. Let us visit the spots and trails he made famous.

TURTLETOWN

On the map we see that Eel River joins the Wabash River at Logansport. On its north bank five miles east of Columbia City and about sixteen miles northwest of Fort Wayne is a large field now regularly planted in farm crops. This is the site of Turtletown.

TIME-TABLE

Little Turtle born at Turtletown	1751
La Balme's defeat	1780
Harmar's defeat	1790
St. Clair's defeat	1791
Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers	1794
Little Turtle dies	1812

Here A-que-nack-que, Little Turtle's father, lived when he led the Miamis in driving back the fierce Iroquois. Here Little Turtle and his sisters were born and grew up. At this village a number of kidnapped settler's children were adopted and raised by Miami families. These included William Wells and Frances Slocum. Little Turtle could become chief of his father's tribe only through some outstanding act of leadership. This he first showed in the defeat of Auguste de la Balme.

LA BALME'S EXPEDITION

La Balme was a Frenchman who came to America with Lafayette at the time of the American Revolution. La Balme was with George Rogers Clark in the capture of Vincennes. From this he got the idea of an expedition of his own. With men he gathered at Vincennes he started northward to Detroit. On the way he stopped at Miami-town. This was an early French settlement where Fort Wayne is now located. It was across the Maumee River from Kekionga, the capital village of the Miamis. He helped himself to the trading supplies of the French merchants there. These traders aroused the Miami Indians, and Little Turtle took charge. La Balme and his men were penned in and wiped out. Historians disagree on the exact site where this took place. One such site is now marked along Eel River two miles east of Turtletown.

HARMAR'S DEFEAT

The Americans were crossing the eastern mountains and building their cabins in Kentucky and north of the Ohio River. Little Turtle and his people feared the loss of their hunting grounds. To drive out

the Americans the Indians would make raids into Kentucky in which cabins were burned and settlers were scalped. President George Washington knew that Kekionga was the place from which many of the raids started. He ordered General Josiah Harmar to lead an army to destroy Kekionga.



CHIEF LITTLE TURTLE.

This portrait appears in Helm's History of Allen County with the artist unnamed.

When Harmar reached Kekionga (in the present Lakeside area of Fort Wayne) he found the cabins burned and the Indians gone. They had fled northwestward toward Turtletown. The army burned the buried corn and remaining crops. Colonel Hardin was sent

with part of the army to catch the fleeing Indians. At a place about ten miles northwest of Fort Wayne (now called Heller's Corner) Little Turtle had set up a trap. When Hardin's force rushed into a small space clear of trees Little Turtle's warriors fired from behind trees and bushes. There were very few survivors but Colonel Hardin was one.

Harmar had made one day's march back toward the Ohio River when Colonel Hardin begged for a chance to redeem his defeat. Foolishly Harmar allowed him to take a part of the army back to surprise the Indians at Kekionga. Little Turtle was ready for him. As Hardin's regulars tried to cross the Maumee River into Kekionga (at the foot of what is now Harmar Street) Little Turtle's men poured a deadly fire into them. The remainder of Harmar's army hastened back to Cincinnati in defeat.

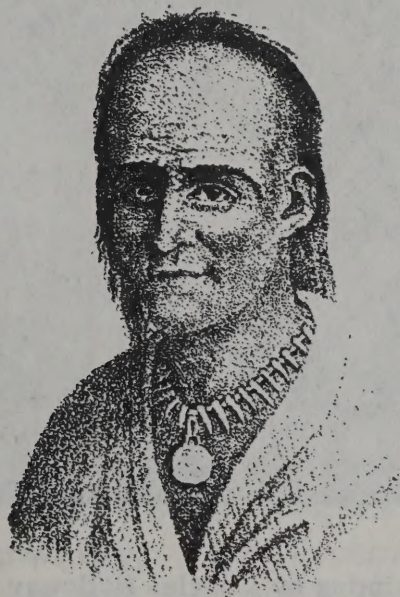
ST. CLAIR'S DEFEAT

The pioneer settlements now were really alarmed. President Washington ordered General Arthur St. Clair to collect an army and proceed to Kekionga and do what Harmar had failed to do.

St. Clair's army of 1500 men was the largest that ever had been sent against the Indians. However, it was made up of very poor material. The American leaders also had little respect for the fighting ability of Little Turtle and his warriors. The result was that St. Clair did not even reach Kekionga. At what is today Fort Recovery, Ohio (see map) his army was surprised and completely overwhelmed. It was the greatest defeat the Americans ever suffered at the hands of the Indians. The Indian victory was largely due to Little Turtle's generalship.

WAYNE'S CAMPAIGN

President Washington had trouble getting Congress to grant more money to raise another army. This time General Anthony Wayne was picked to take charge. Carefully he drilled his men in Indian fighting. He always was alert to guard against a surprise. After two years of preparation he was ready to move northward through Ohio. By then Little Turtle was convinced that here was a leader and an army that could not be surprised. In an Indian council he advised peace but was outvoted.



LITTLE TURTLE

On Little Turtle's first trip to the nation's capitol President Washington asked Gilbert Stuart to paint Little Turtle's portrait. This portrait was destroyed when the British burned the capitol in 1814. This is supposed to be a sketch of the original portrait.

The deciding battle was fought at Fallen Timbers near present-day Toledo, Ohio (see map). The Indians under Blue Jacket were swept from the field. Little Turtle fought along with the Indians but was not in command. The Indian league he had built up was crushed. It would not be long until the Indian lands would be overrun and they would be pushed farther west.



This mural painting by Charles Holloway shows Little Turtle and some fellow chiefs at the Greenville Treaty conference. This mural is in the Court Room of Superior Court 3 in the Allen County Courthouse.

LITTLE TURTLE WORKS FOR HIS PEOPLE

Little Turtle argued for fair treatment at the Greenville Treaty meeting but to little avail. However, he signed the treaty saying, "I will be the last to

sign this treaty; I will be the last to break it." General Wayne was impressed with the ability and dignity of Little Turtle and arranged for him to visit President Washington at Philadelphia. Here the President presented him a sword (see page 11) and arranged for Gilbert Stuart to paint his portrait. (See page 5).

This was not his last visit to the capital of the United States. With his foster son and secretary, William Wells, he visited President John Adams. He asked the President to protect his people from the sale of whiskey. He told the President that whiskey had killed more of his people than all wars and diseases together. Again in 1801 he visited President Jefferson urging him to protect his people from whiskey and to help teach his people how to farm.

The United States government built a house for Little Turtle on Eel River. Here he lived with the help of his Negro servant. He used no liquor but he did like to eat. This resulted in his developing a so-called gentleman's disease called the gout. He saw that his people would need to learn to farm in order to survive. With this in view he asked the help of a religious group, the Friends (sometimes called Quakers). They sent a young man, Philip Dennis, who set up a demonstration farm near present-day Huntington (see map). There was some success at first. It was all forgotten, however, when Tecumseh got many of the Miamis to join him and the British in the War of 1812.

In one of his trips to the nation's capital Little Turtle learned of vaccination for smallpox. He had himself vaccinated. He began vaccinating his Miami tribesmen when he returned to Eel River.

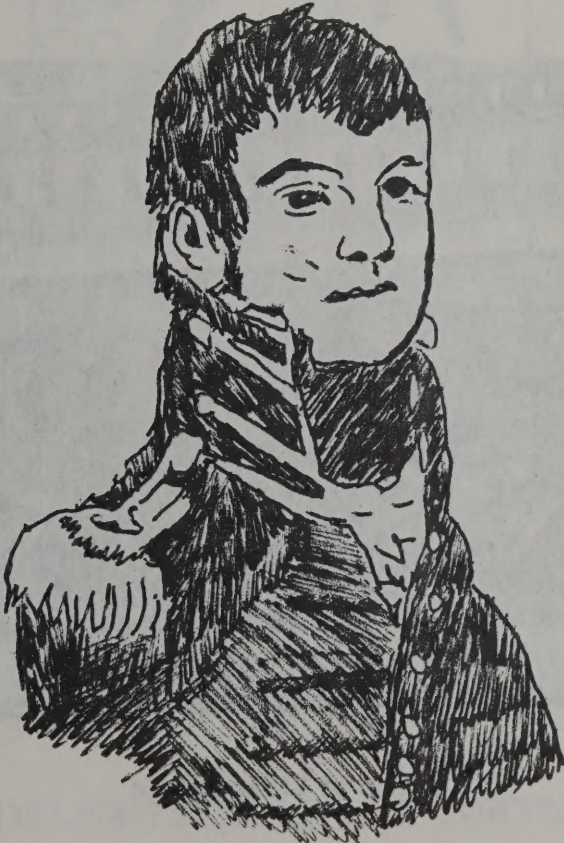
In his attempt to live at peace with the United States Little Turtle was often charged by his own people of having sold out to the whites. Little Turtle remained true to the treaty he signed. He urged his Miamis to have nothing to do with Tecumseh.



This painting by Howard Chandler Christy and called "The Signing of the Treaty of Greenville" shows Little Turtle speaking, Wells interpreting while Wayne and his officers and a host of Indian chiefs were interested listeners.

WILLIAM WELLS

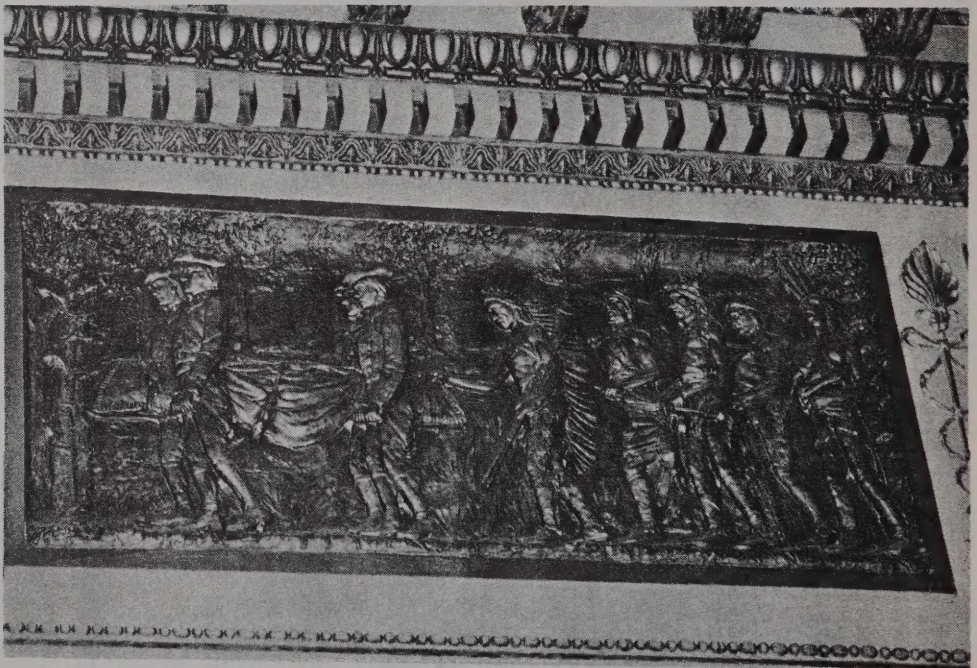
William Wells was captured as a boy on one of the early Miami raids into Kentucky. He was adopted and raised by Little Turtle. He fought along with the Indians in defeating Harmar's and St. Clair's armies. With the approach of Wayne's army, however, he decided to change sides. This was done without hard feelings on the part of Little Turtle. Wells became a scout for Wayne, and after Fallen Timbers he became Indian Agent for the United States government at Fort Wayne. He married Sweet Breeze, one of Little Turtle's daughters, and was secretary to Little Turtle on his visits to the nation's capital. He built a house on



WILLIAM WELLS

Little Turtle's adopted son, secretary, and son-in-law.

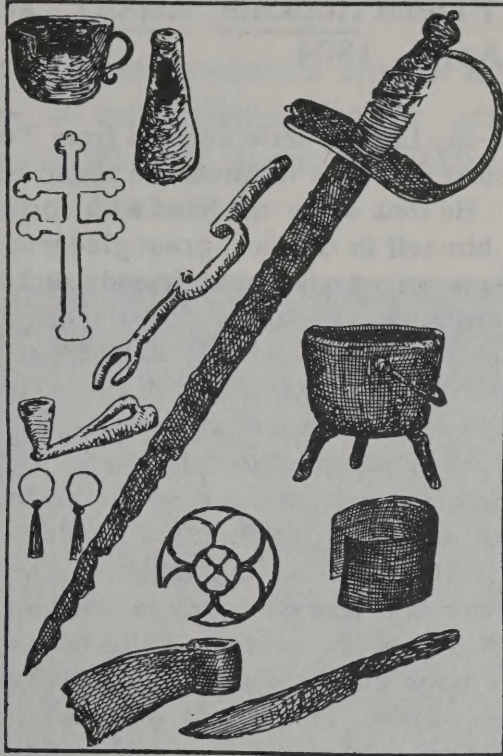
land near the present Fort Wayne Filtration Plant. The site of the house is now at 1410 Spy Run Avenue. Here Little Turtle came to stay so he could use the medical services available at the fort and it was here he died. He was buried with all the honors of war by officials stationed at the fort. The grave was forgotten until one hundred years later a workman digging out a basement for a house on Lawton Place stumbled on it. It is now marked with a stone and plaque. Some of the articles found in the grave are now in the Historical Museum.



Burial of Little Turtle

From panel in Superior Court 3 room in Allen County Courthouse.

Just a few weeks after Little Turtle's death William Wells was killed by Indians as he heroically tried to evacuate the troops and residents of Fort Dearborn in present-day Chicago to Fort Wayne.



Articles found in Little Turtle's grave. This is from Griswold's sketch and shows sword reportedly given to Little Turtle by President Washington.

SIDELIGHTS ON LITTLE TURTLE

From Journal of Henry Hay Miamitown. Jan-
uary, 1791

The Gree and Little Turtle went off on horse-back for their wintering camps after breakfasting and thanking us for the reception they received from us during their stay--I gave them a bottle of Rum, for it must be observed that they have nothing here to live upon--everything they possess and have is in the woods. . . .

From Friend Hopkins' Report Wells' home at Fort Wayne, April, 1804

'About mid-day Little Turtle arrived from Turtletown. He approached us with a countenance placid beyond description. He took us by the hand with cordiality and expressed himself in terms of great gladness in meeting us. He inquired about his friends and acquaintances in Baltimore; also about . . . the difficulties we had encountered in our journey through the wilderness.' He went on to tell of the death of his nephew, Toad, and his two brothers and how he had been ill but helped by medicine from the fort. He had now seen 53 winters, and the death of his brothers made him think of death and that his time would soon come. Dinner at Wells' home was served by his wife, Sweet Breeze, who had prepared both a roasted and a boiled turkey with cranberry sauce. While waiting at Fort Wayne for other chiefs to arrive Hopkins visited the place where Little Turtle had defeated Harmar in 1790. He also visited the field where Little Turtle drilled his Indian army to defeat St. Clair's army.

From Martha Tyson in appendix to Hopkins' Report Ellicott Mills, Maryland. December, 1807

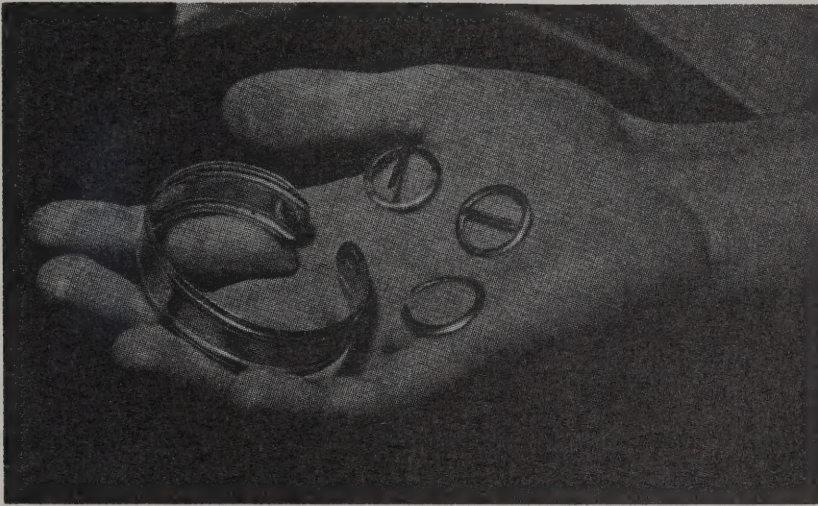
Little Turtle entered the parlor and bowed gracefully as he was introduced to the family. He made a short address. . . . He exceeded all other chiefs in dignity of appearance. . . . Immediately upon entering the house he took off his hat and carried it under his arm during the rest of his visit. His appearance and manners graceful and agreeable in an uncommon degree, were admired by all who made his acquaintance.

Should you wish to read further about Little Turtle get the following books from the library:

Otho Winger The Last of the Miamis and Little Turtle

C.M. Young Little Turtle, the Great Chief of the Miamis

Also use free resource sheets no. 10 on Little Turtle and no. 20 on William Wells, and pamphlet on the Miamis in 1790--all from the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society.



Trade silver from Little Turtle's grave.

How did Little Turtle look? We are not sure. He lived before we had cameras. Even the written descriptions by people of his day differ. We know President Washington had Gilbert Stuart paint Little Turtle's portrait. This portrait was destroyed when the British burned the Capitol in 1814. For the so-called sketch of this painting see page 5. Perhaps we may have to use our imaginations as others have done. See painter Holloway's guess on page 6, and that of some unknown artist in Helm's History of Allen County (page 3), and the heroic one of Howard Chandler Christy's on page 8.

A Bus or Car Tour of Little Turtle Country

(Suggested for parents and teachers)

Starting from the place where U.S. 30 crosses Interstate 69 drive west from Fort Wayne on U.S. 30 11.7 miles to Road 700 E (the next exit west after the Whitley-Allen County line road).

Turn right on 700 E which after a mile becomes Old Trail. Follow Old Trail northwest to Turtletown a distance of 4.2 miles. This is Little Turtle's birthplace. Notice the Boy Scout marker at the bridge over Eel River (the Ke-na-po-mo-co).

Turn around and retrace your route on Old Trail to the La Balme Road (2.1 miles). Turn left and follow the La Balme Road to the markers for the Eel River Post, Fort, and Little Turtle House sites (.6 mile). Continue on east on the La Balme Road to the La Balme Marker (.3 mile). The La Balme Road dead-ends at the Johnson Road (.7 mile). Turn left (north) and follow the Johnson Road 1.7 miles to the Carroll Road. Turn right and drive 3 miles east to U.S. 33.

The intersection of Carroll Road and U.S. 33 is called Heller's Corner. The scene of the ambush by Little Turtle of some of Harmar's men supposedly is 1/4 mile east on the Carroll Road in the field to the south between the Eel River Baptist Church and Eel River.

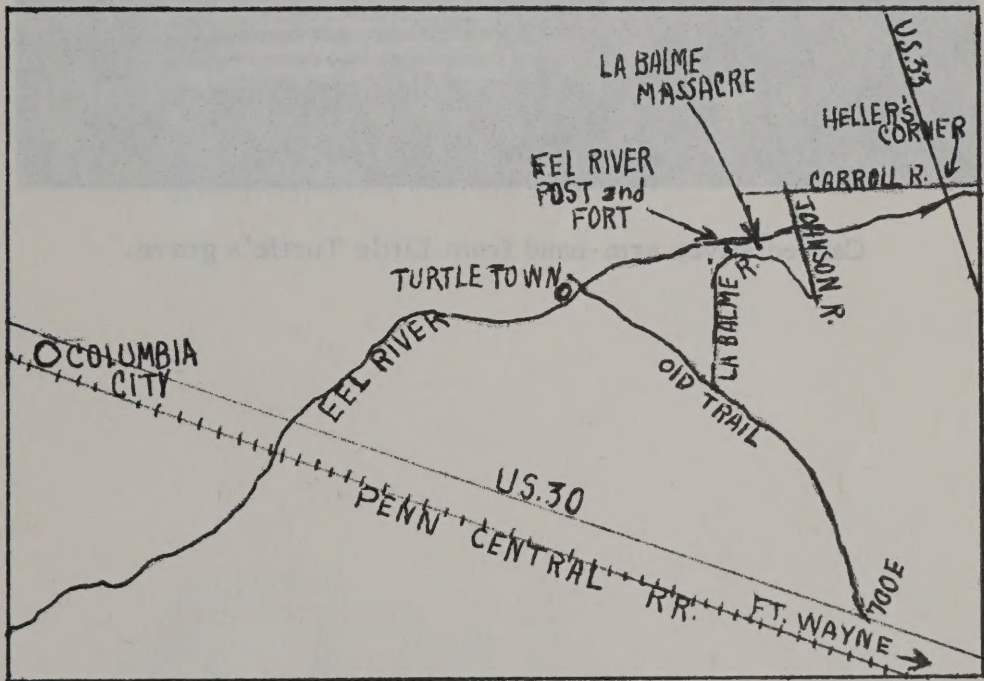
Turn left on U.S. 33 and return to Fort Wayne (8.3 miles).

Turn left into Coliseum Drive to Clinton Street. Turn right on Clinton and follow south to Main Street. Turn left on Main and at Main and Clay note the site of the fort to which Little Turtle went for medical aid in his last years.

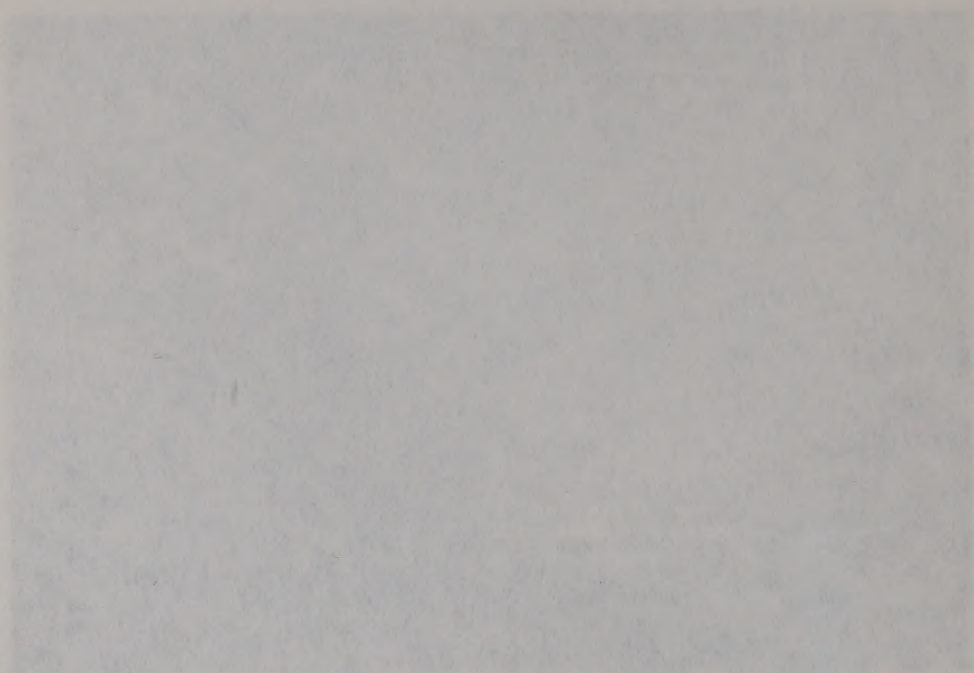
Turn left at Clay and cross the Columbia

Street Bridge. Turn right at Edgewater, the first street at the east end of the bridge. Follow Edgewater to the marker of Wylly's defeat by Little Turtle.

Continue east on Edgewater to Crescent. Turn left on Crescent and follow it to Tennessee Avenue. Turn left on Tennessee and cross the Tennessee Avenue Bridge. Turn right at the first street beyond the bridge, Griswold Drive. Follow it two blocks to Lawton Place. Turn left on Lawton Place and in the middle of the first block park in order to view the last resting place of Me-she-kin-no-quah.

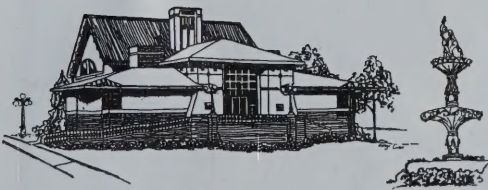


Map showing Eel River locations connected with Little Turtle.



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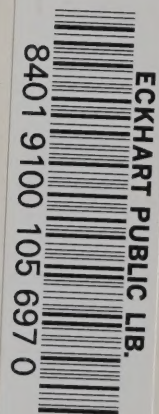
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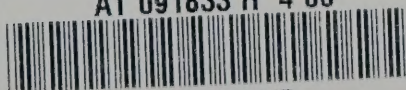
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